

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their specification in order to correct typographical errors. Clearly, these amendments to the specification do not add new matter to the application. As for amendment to the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4 of Applicants' specification, note reference to 2-alkenol "which is an intermediate reaction product of methanol and TMP contained in the reaction product liquid", TMP being trimethylolpropane (see the last two lines on page 3 of Applicants' specification). As for amendment to the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13 of Applicants' specification, note reference throughout the specification to extracting "reagent". Clearly, these amendments to the specification do not add new matter to the application.

Applicants have amended claims 9 and 10 to delete recitation that the washing of the extract liquid with water uses "a decanter".

Entry of the present amendments, and examination of the above-identified application on the merits in due course, are respectfully requested.

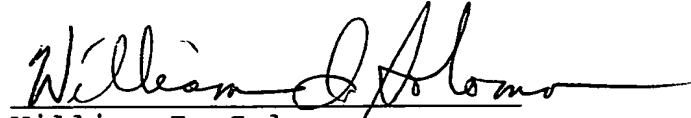
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made in the specification and claims by the current Preliminary Amendment. This marked-up version is on the attached pages, the first page of which is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this

paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit
Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 396.40193X00) and please credit
any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William I. Solomon", written over a horizontal line.

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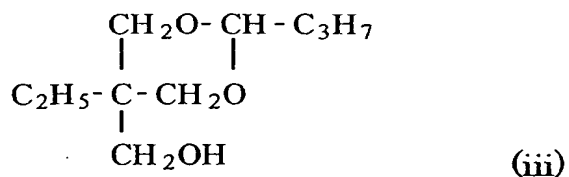
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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

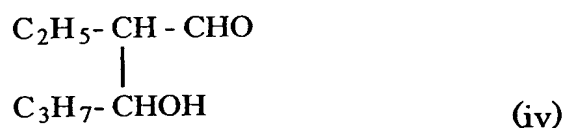
IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please delete the paragraph from page 3, line 11 to page 4, line 4 after formula (v), and substitute therefor the following new paragraph:

When an aliphatic aldehyde is used as the extracting reagent, the yield of the extracted polyol increases and the fraction of the removed salt of formic acid also increases. For example, a process in which butyraldehyde is used as the extracting reagent is described in Japanese Patent Application Publication Heisei 4(1992)-17169. In accordance with this process, the amount of a salt of formic acid remaining in the extracted and separated polyol can be suppressed to 0.3% or less. However, although the continuous distillation of this crude polyol can be conducted, a great amount of acetals are formed from the polyol and the aldehyde used as the extracting reagent in distillation under an atmospheric pressure for separating the extracting reagent since aldehyde which is used as the extracting reagent is very reactive itself. For example, when the aliphatic aldehyde is normal-butyraldehyde (referred to as NBAL, hereinafter) and the polyol is trimethylolpropane (referred to as TMP, hereinafter), TMP-NBAL acetal expressed by formula (iii):



is formed as a byproduct. NBAL aldol expressed by formula (iv):



is formed as another byproduct by the reaction between NBAL molecules. Moreover, methanol and 2-alkenol expressed by formula (v):



which is an intermediate reaction product of methanol and TMP contained in the reaction product liquid is extracted. These compounds are separated and recovered together with the extracting reagent during separation of the extracting reagent.

Please delete the paragraph bridging pages 12 and 13, and substitute therefor the following new paragraph:

Since an acetal and an aldol tend to be formed as byproducts from the aldehyde used as the extracting reagent and the polyol and from the aldehyde molecules used as the extracting reagent, respectively, during recovery of the extracting reagent from the extract liquid, pH of the extract liquid is adjusted at 6.0 to 9.0 and preferably 6.5 to 8.0 to prevent the formation of the byproducts. When pH is smaller than 6.0, the acetal is formed in a great amount. When pH exceeds 9.0, the aldol condensation tends to take place between the aldehyde molecules used as the extracting [agent] reagent.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims presently in the application as follows:

8. (Amended) A process for producing a polyol according to Claim 1, wherein the extract liquid is washed with water [using a decanter] in the step of washing with water, the extracting reagent in a separated aqueous layer using a decanter is removed by distillation and water obtained from a bottom of a distillation column in the distillation is recycled to the step of concentration.

9. (Amended) A process for producing a polyol according to Claim 1, wherein the extract liquid is washed with water [using a decanter] in the step of washing with water, the extracting reagent and a portion of water in a separated

aqueous layer using a decanter are removed by distillation and a liquid obtained from a bottom of a distillation column in the distillation is recycled to the step of extraction.